

Message Text

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SUBJECT: LOS ANGELES JUBILEE SINGERS

REF: (A) ABIDJAN 7535 (B) ABIDJAN 7536

FORM AMBASSADOR SMITH

1. AS A SUPPLEMENT TO REFERENCED REPORTS FILED BY ESCORT OFFICER LINCH,

I WISH TO CONVEY TO DEPARTMENT MY FEELINGS OF DEEPEST GRATIFICATION
WITH
VISIT TO ABIDJAN OF LOS ANGELES JUBILEE SINGERS.

2. THE DEPT. IS TO BE HIGHLY CONGRATULATED ON CHOICE OF THIS GROUP AS

CULTURAL PRESENTATION, NOT ONLY ARE MEMBERS ARTISTS OF HIGHEST CALIBER

BUT THEY ARE INDIVIDUALLY CHARMING AND COOPERATIVE. THEIR EXPERTISE,
MOREOVER, IS IN A FIELD OF MUSIC WHICH, IS LITTLE LOCALLY KNOWN HERE,
IS EMINENTLY SYMPATHETIC TO AFRICAN MUSICAL TASTES. EQUALLY IMPORTANT

IS TWO-FOLD THEMATIC IMPACT OF THEIR PROGRAM -- THEY SHOWED NOT ONLY
THAT AMERICA HAS TOP-NOTCH MUSICAL PERFORMERS, BUT THEY EMPHASIZED
MOST FORCEFULLY INTER-RELATIONSHIP OF AFRICAN AND AMERICAN CULTURES,
AND IMPORTANCE THAT WE ATTACH TO THIS.

3. ON BASIS OF ABOVE, OUR JOINT DECISION WITH USIS WAS TO MAKE
A DECIDEDLY MAJOR EVENT OF THEIR VISIT. OUR DECISION TO RENT THE
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PRESTIGIOUS 2100-SEAT PALAIS DES CONGRES WAS NOT WITHOUT RISK. THIS

CONCERT HALL IS PART OF HOTEL IVOIRE COMPLEX, GENERALLY CONSIDERED ANATHEMA TO STUDENTS AND TO ALL BUT ELITE OF IVORIAN SOCIETY. CONCERT WAS SCHEDULED ALMOST FULL MONTH BEFORE FULL "RENTREE" FROM SUMMER VACATION. MOST IMPORTANT, WHILE RENTAL FEE OF DOLS 2,000 WOULD HAVE IMPOSED A SERIOUS FINANCIAL DRAIN ON USIS' FINANCIAL RESOURCES IN

CASE OF POOR TURNOUT, OUR MAJOR CONCERN WAS TO HAVE AN ARTISTIC SUCCESS -- INCLUDING RESPECTABLY FULL HOUSE THAT REPRESENTED IVORIANS OF ALL SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC LEVELS.

4. IN ORDER TO ATTAIN THIS ADMITTEDLY AMBITIOUS GOAL, WE MOUNTED AN UNPRECEDENTED (FOR ABIDJAN, AT LEAST) PUBLICITY/PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN IN ALL MASS MEDIA. ASIDE FROM PAID ADVERTISEMENTS, PUBLIC POSTERS AND OTHER NORMAL ACTIVITIES, UNOFFICIAL (AND UNPAID) PHOTOS AND ARTICLES STARTED TO APPEAR MORE THAN TWO WEEKS BEFORE CONCERT. DAILY NEWSPAPER "FRATERNITE-MATIN" CARRIED THREE PHOTOS AND CAPTIONS, CULMINATING IN FULL ARTICLE SHORTLY BEFORE CONCERT. WIDELY-READ WEEKLY "IVOIRE-DIMANCHE" CARRIED SEPARATE FEATURE AND SEVERAL PHOTOS TWO DAYS BEFORE CONCERT. WEEKLY ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE CARRIED PHOTO OF GROUP ON COVER WITH INSIDE STORY. TELEVISION DEVOTED TWO HALF-HOUR DISCUSSION PROGRAMS ON SINGERS IN POPULAR "TELE-MIDI" SERIES AND MANY SPOT ANNOUNCEMENTS, (AS WELL AS RECORDING AN HOUR'S PROGRAM FOR VIEWING AFTER THEIR DEPARTURE). RADIO CARRIED FULL PROGRAM ON THEIR MUSIC, AS WELL AS INTERVIEWS. STUDENT LEADERS WERE CONTACTED TO SPREAD WORD THAT, FOR ONCE, PALAIS DE CONGRES WAS NOT "OFF-LIMITS". EQUALLY IMPORTANT WAS OUR OBTAINING "PATRONAGE" OF PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE CONCERT AT PALAIS DES CONGRES' AND OF MINISTER OF EDUCATION (AND CULTURE) FOR OPENING OF NEW CULTURAL CENTER PRECEDING EVENING, THUS ENSURING FULL COVERAGE BY ALL MEDIA.

5. THANKS TO CLOSE AND EFFECTIVE TEAMWORK AMONG ALL ELEMENTS OF EMBASSY AND USIS AND TREMENDOUS PERSONAL EFFORT OF PAO JAMES PERRIN, WE SUCCEEDED TO AN EVEN HIGHER DEGREE THAN WE HAD DARED HOPE. FIRST CONCERT AT INAUGURATION OF CULTURAL CENTER WAS A WELL ATTENDED (AND WELL-RECEIVED) OCCASION WHICH SERVED TO LAUNCH NEW CENTER IN COCODY WITH MID-ECHOLON OFFICIALS AND ACADEMIC COMMUNITY. MINED TOLD ME HOW MUCH HE ENJOYED IT AND HE ATTENDED FOLLOWING NIGHT'S CONCERT. EVEN MORE IMPRESSIVE WAS ATTENDANCE OF AT LEAST 1500 PERSONS AT PALAIS FOLLOWING NIGHT. STUDENTS AND MID-LEVEL FUNCTIONARIES WERE UNCLASSIFIED

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PRESENT IN LARGE NUMBERS AND TURNOUT OF HIGH-RANKING GOIC OFFICIALS WAS TRULY REMARKABLE, INCLUDING TWO OF IVORY COAST'S SUB-PRESIDENTS PLUS LARGE NUMBER OF MINISTERS OF STATE AND MINISTERS. MANY EXPRESSED TO ME PERSONALLY THEIR ENTHUSIASM FOR THE GROUP, NONE MORE THAN MINISTER OF STATE FOR INTERIOR, MATTHEW EKRA, A LEADING IVORIAN PROTESTANT. FRONT-PAGE OF WEDNESDAY'S "FRATERNITE-MATIN", IN FACT, CARRIED PICTURE OF VIP FRONT ROW, SHOWING MINISTER OF STATE FOR TOURISM N'DIA KOFFI SPONTANEOUSLY RISING TO HIS FEET TO ACCLAIM

SINGERS. ACCOMPING TEXT CONCLUDED: QUOTE WITHOUT DOUBT OUR PUBLIC NOW BETTER UNDERSTANDS THE RELIGIOUS FERVOR SPRINGING FROM THE SPIRITUAL CREATIVITY THAT LINKS THE NEGRO SPIRITUAL TO TRADITIONAL AFRICAN MUSIC. UNQUOTE.

6. IN SUM, VISIT OF LOS ANGELES JUBILEE SINGERS COULD NOT HAVE BEEN MORE EFFECTIVE. WE REACHED OUR TARGET AUDIENCE ON ALL LEVELS WITH MESSAGE WE HAD IN MIND--AND WHEN ALL THE BOOKKEEPING IS DONE, WE MAY EVEN HAVE A FEW DOLLARS TO TURN OVER TO GENERAL ACCOUNTS FUND. WHILE WE LAY DUE CLAIM FOR A PORTION OF THIS SUCCESS, I WISH TO EMPHASIZE THAT WE ARE MOST GRATIFIED THAT DEPARTMENT SUNT US SUCH AN OUTSTANDING GROUP AND ONE SO EMINENTLY SUITED TO OUR WANTS AND NEEDS. PAO INFORMS ME THAT DURING HIS THREE TOURS IN AFRICA, TIS IS BY FAR THE MOST IDEALLY SUITED PRESENTATION HE HAS HAD PLEASURE OF PROGRAMMING. THUS OUR HATS ARE DOFFED TO DEPARTMENT -- AND WHEN CAN WE EXPECT MORE OF THIS ENTERTAINMENT?
SMITH

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